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## 2002 Vocational Rehabilitation Rulemaking

Currently the Department of Labor & Industries is conducting a rulemaking process on Chapter 296-19A of the Washington Administrative Codes. The department has collected informal feedback on the regulations. The collected comments are being reviewed and the proposed rules are being determined. Following the filing of the proposed rules, L&I will conduct four public hearings. The public hearings will provide the public with an opportunity to submit written and oral comments on the proposed rules.

For more information or to view the timeline, please see the formal website at:

[www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm). The website will be updated with new information throughout the rule making process.

## 10 Outcome Minimum to Establish CACO

Starting with the July 2002 Vocational Provider Performance Report, Complexity Adjusted Cost/Outcome scores (CACOs) will be shown for vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) as well as for firms. The following questions and answers address common questions vocational providers have asked concerning VRCs, new branches, the CACO calculation, and the performance report.

- **How many closures does a VRC need to have a CACO?**

VRCs must have at least 10 outcome recommendations or claim manager (CM) closures during the span of time that is covered by the Vocational Provider Performance Report. This span of time is known as the “sample period”.

- **When did the sample period begin for VRCs?**

For the July 2002 performance report, the sample period for VRCs begins with June 1, 2001. Over the next year, the sample period will gradually increase to 18 months. Refer to Provider Bulletin 01-04, appendix C, for sample period details.

- **What referrals will be in the VRCs' CACO calculation?**

The CACO for VRCs will be calculated on referrals that:

- were received and assigned after June 1, 2001, and
- the VRC recommended an outcome on Voc Link or the CM closed.

- **What will happen if a VRC does not have a 10-closure minimum during the sample period?**

Vocational rehabilitation counselors, who do not have 10 closure recommendations or CM outcomes during the sample period, will not have CACO scores reported on the quarterly Vocational Provider Performance Report.

- **Which VRCs may receive direct referrals from the department?**

VRCs who have a credential (CRC, CDMS or ABVE) or have a CACO score may receive referrals directly from the department. (Note: Per WAC 296-19A-210, all providers must obtain a credential by 11/30/2006.)

- **How will non-credentialed VRCs or VRCs without a CACO receive referrals?**

A VRC in this category can receive referrals through the branch where he or she is employed. When a VRC in this category attains 10 outcome recommendations or CM closures in the sample period, the VRC will have a CACO on the following quarterly Vocational Provider Performance Report and can receive referrals directly from the department.

For more information, please contact Jim Kammerer at [kamj235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kamj235@lni.wa.gov) or Mary Kaempfe at [kaem235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kaem235@lni.wa.gov).

## **New Provider Branches and CACO**

When the VRCs assigned to a new branch collectively achieve 10 recommendations or outcomes, the referral CACO scores from those VRCs will aggregate to calculate the branch CACO. The branch CACO will be published in the next performance measurement report.

Once achieving a published CACO, the branch does not need to maintain 10 recommendations or outcomes in subsequent sample periods. The CACO will be calculated on the referrals the branch has in the sample period. Providers with no outcomes in the sample period will appear with asterisks (and no data) next to the branch names.

For more information, please contact Jim Kammerer at [kamj235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kamj235@lni.wa.gov) or Mary Kaempfe at [kaem235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kaem235@lni.wa.gov).

## **Referral Eligibility – Reminder for July 2002**

Currently, a provider with a Standard Error of the Mean below 3.0 is Eligible for referrals. From July 2002 forward, the eligibility threshold will be dependent on the number of closures a provider had during the sample period. A table showing the eligibility thresholds effective July 2002 can be found in

Appendix D of Provider Bulletin 01-04. Provider Bulletins are published on the website at: [http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/hsa\\_pbs1.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/hsa_pbs1.htm).

For more information, please contact Jim Kammerer at [kamj235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kamj235@lni.wa.gov) or Mary Kaempfe at [kaem235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kaem235@lni.wa.gov).

## Fee Cap Outcomes and the Performance Measurement Report

This is a reminder concerning how fee cap data is captured for the performance measurement report. The number in the fee cap column on the report is the actual number of referral closures:

1. completed by that provider,
2. during the sample period, and
3. for which the department paid cumulative bills equal to the fee cap for that referral type.

Only those referrals in the fee cap column have had CACOs calculated with the .75 divisor.

The referrals in the fee cap column on the report are identified with billing data and this process is *independent* of the CM's outcome decision.

For more information, you may contact Mary Kaempfe at [kaem235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kaem235@lni.wa.gov).

## Voc Link Connect Manual

The department plans to publish a new version of the Voc Link Connect Manual by June 2002. The new manual will contain additional helpful information about accessing information on the department's LINIIS computer system, and a complete listing of the referral outcome codes used by vocational providers. The manual will be available in both electronic (web based) and hard copy format. Watch for an announcement on the vocational services web site when the new manual is available.

[www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm).

For more information, contact [vocrehab@lni.wa.gov](mailto:vocrehab@lni.wa.gov).

## Outcome Clarifications

The HSA web site will soon contain a current listing of all referral outcomes and definitions. You will be able to look under "Outcome Definitions" for a chart arranged by outcome type. The chart will identify which outcomes carry dispute rights and show the outcomes available only to claim managers as well as the outcomes available to vocational providers.

Since the training provided on the outcomes, several new outcomes were created: Use **ADMA** when declining a referral AND no bills have been submitted to the department. Use **ADM8** (vocational provider leaves firm) when moving to a different firm or geographical location. **ADM4** (vocational provider no longer accepting referrals) can be used when the vocational provider wants to close all referrals and does not want referrals for the foreseeable future--such as when promotion to a supervisory job or when leaving the profession altogether.

For more information, contact Donna Spencer at (360) 902-6576.

## Vocational Provider Registration and Change Forms

The department has revised the following forms:

- Vocational Provider Application
- Intern Supplemental Application
- Firm Vocational Provider Account Change Form, and
- Individual Vocational Provider Account Change Form.

Links to the new forms can be found at the department's vocational services web site:

[www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/voc\\_VocationalReports.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/voc_VocationalReports.htm) (see related article in this Provider Update). The revised forms are dated December 2001 or later. **Effective March 31, 2002, the department quit accepting the old versions of those forms.**

For more information, contact Patti Hamrick at [hamp235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:hamp235@lni.wa.gov).

## Instructions for Splitting Billing Across Multiple Referrals

This notice is to clarify the proper method for billing vocational rehabilitation services where an injured worker has two (or more) open claims where time-loss compensation is being paid, and restrictions within each claim preclude return to work. In this case, L&I splits the costs equally between the claims.

Typically, multiple open claims where time-loss compensation is being paid occur either where an injured worker has two separate claims from employment with two separate employers, or two separate claims with the same employer. In either situation, it may be advantageous to provide a single set of vocational rehabilitation services. To do so, however, the department must make two (or more) separate referrals, concurrently, for vocational services. The department will clearly specify if the vocational provider is to split the billing as noted in the above example.

When billing for vocational rehabilitation services on multiple referrals and/or claims, please follow these instructions:

1. L&I strongly encourages providers to split billable hours over a larger interval of work (up to the entire billing date span), rather than per each single activity.

**Example:** Assume Provider XYZ has two open referrals for the same worker. If the provider bills once a week, one approach would be to total all the work done with that injured worker on both referrals in a day, or in the entire week, then divide by 2. This approach may generate much less complication than splitting individual phone calls, meetings, etc. across both referrals.

2. Bills must be split EXACTLY equally, in whole units, charging the same dollar amount, on each claim/referral.
3. If, after totaling all work done during the billing period, the total is still not an even number of units, it is permissible to round to the nearest even whole number of units, then divide by 2 as directed above.
4. If split bills do not contain the same number of units, they will be denied and must be rebilled in the correct format. The reason for this is that the department's bill payment system may misinterpret them as duplicate bills, rather than split bills (Explanation of Benefit code 935 on the department's Remittance Advice).

In the unlikely but possible event that there are three (or more) claims, all requiring time-loss compensation and vocational services, the vocational rehabilitation bills are to be split accordingly (i.e., 3 claims = by thirds, 4 claims = by fourths, etc.), based on the number of concurrent referrals received.

Please ensure that the contact log indicates that there are multiple referrals and that split billing is occurring. Clear and ample documentation of this practice will help to prevent any misunderstandings in the event of an audit.

For more information, contact Joyce Vandeventer at [vane235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:vane235@lni.wa.gov).

## **We Need Your Help**

Individuals and organizations who provide services to workers involved in retraining plans often face challenges in getting paid for those services. Injured workers participating in plans also often don't understand how to get reimbursed for expenses approved in their plan. When you provide plan implementation services, we encourage you to assist these providers in establishing an appropriate provider account and assisting providers and injured workers in submitting bills. Here are some specific helpful items we'd like you to communicate and assist with:

- All schools, on the job training sites and plan vendors need to have provider numbers. Applications are available at [www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/forms.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/forms.htm). Your assistance to providers in this area will expedite plan implementation. Providers can also be directed to the Provider Account Unit at (360) 902-5140 for assistance in this process.
- Ensure schools, vendors, work evaluators, etc. have the appropriate plan implementation referral ID and referral provider number to use in their billing.
- Assist workers, vendors, etc. with billing their services with the appropriate departmental procedure codes. Providers can also be directed to the Provider Hotline at 1-800-848-0811 for assistance in this area.
- Remind workers to submit receipts with all requests for reimbursement and advise them to KEEP COPIES.
- Advise workers the travel cost encumbrance form must be submitted with all retraining travel bills. This will expedite payment.
- Make sure the VRC signs the worker's vocational travel expense vouchers. Do not sign non-vocational travel vouchers.
- Schools can do asset testing. The procedure code the school should use is 0390R, type of service 9. This service falls under Vocational Evaluation. The total of all services under Vocational Evaluation has a per claim limit of \$1100.00 and the charges are factored into the costs of the vocational services for purposes of CACO calculation.
- In plan development, if you encounter an enrollment deposit, or required enrollment guarantee fee, please contact the department's vocational services consultant for the claim to obtain guidance in handling this charge.
- Changes in plan costs, or circumstances, may require a revised cost encumbrance or a plan modification. Plan modification guidelines are available at [www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm](http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm).

Your assistance with these items will go a long way to ensure retraining plans proceed smoothly.

For more information, you may contact the Provider Hotline at 1-800-848-0811.

## **VTSG Membership Expanding; Looking for Interested VRCs**

The Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group is a group of vocational providers who regularly meet with L&I staff to review, discuss and provide input into the development and implementation of L&I's vocational services policies. The department is seeking interested front-line, direct service providers to complement the representation of the current members on the Vocational Technical Stakeholder Group (VTSG). Three members added this year would each serve a 3-year term. Member expectations include:

- Attending 3-hour meetings (currently bi-monthly, alternating between Olympia and Tukwila) – total meeting time is 18 hours/year,
- Participating in discussions and providing input concerning vocational services policies, and
- Participating in subgroups tasked with exploring policy options.

The department will select the members. We are looking for people who can add diversity of experiences and perspectives to the policy discussions. Some desired qualities are:

- Experience working in remote or rural areas of the state,
- Significant State Fund experience,
- Self-insurance experience, and
- Individual counselors.

The department may be able to assist members with transportation costs.

Applications can be printed from the department's web site at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm>.

Please contact Mary Kaempfe at 360-902-6811 or [kaem235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:kaem235@lni.wa.gov) for more information.

## **Vocational Services Web Site**

The department continues to improve its popular vocational services web site. Users will soon see a new and easier to use "front page" format. The site contains links to topics of interest to vocational providers, including Report Forms, Vocational Provider Registration, and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions regarding vocational rules. Vocational providers and other interested parties are urged to check the site frequently, as new information is posted on a regular basis under the "What's New" section:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/hsa/vocational.htm#WhatsNew>.

For more information, contact Patti Hamrick at [hamp235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:hamp235@lni.wa.gov).